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Report to the Chairman, Legislation and National Security Subcommittee, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives

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PEACE CORPS

Meeting the Challenges of the 1990s

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International Affairs Division

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The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman, Legislation and National
Security Subcommittee
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This report responds to your request that we review the operations and activities of the Peace Corps. It suggests ways for the Peace Corps to strengthen its efforts to attain its development and intercultural goals and position itself to meet the challenges of the 1990s.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until your scheduled May 22, 1990, hearing on Peace Corps operations. At that time, copies will be sent to the Director of the Peace Corps and to other interested parties.

This review was performed under the direction of Harold J. Johnson, Director, Foreign Economic Assistance Issues, who can be reached (202) 275-5790. Other major contributors are listed in appendix II.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C Conahan

Frank C. Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General

Executive Summary

Purpose

As the Peace Corps approaches the start of its fourth decade, it faces many challenges adapting to the evolving needs of the countries of the developing world. The Chairman, Legislation and National Security Subcommittee, House Committee on Government Operations, asked GAO to (1) review actions the Peace Corps is taking to respond to the increasing requests by beneficiary countries for skilled volunteers, (2) determine whether the Peace Corps is developing adequate assignments for volunteers, (3) determine how the Peace Corps can strengthen its efforts to recruit minorities, and (4) determine what actions the Peace Corps is taking to promote a better understanding of other cultures on the part of the American people.

Background

The Peace Corps, an independent agency, was established by law in 1961 to help (1) the peoples of other countries meet their needs for trained manpower, particularly the basic needs of those living in the poorest areas of such countries; (2) promote a better understanding of the American people on the part of the peoples served; and (3) promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people.

During the 1960s, the agency focused largely on increasing the number of volunteers and on the intercultural aspects of volunteer service. At this time, the agency experienced tremendous growth. This growth was followed by a period of retrenchment during the 1970s. During this period, the agency experienced a substantial decline in budget and in the number of volunteers, but began to focus greater attention on recruiting volunteers with the special skills increasingly requested by beneficiary countries. During the 1980s, the Peace Corps began to experience modest growth in its budget as it attempted to meet a congressionally mandated objective of 10,000 volunteers, which was added to the agency's enabling legislation in 1985.

Results in Brief

Despite its historic successes, the Peace Corps faces many challenges as it approaches the 1990s. In attempting to reach its 10,000-volunteer objective, it first needs to adopt new mechanisms to attract and retain volunteers with critical skills. The agency has been unable to fully meet countries' requests for volunteers with special skills in such fields as agriculture, education, industrial arts, and home economics. The agency has also experienced difficulty recruiting minorities and, thus, has not shown the true ethnic diversity of the American people.

The Peace Corps also needs to strengthen its programming of assignments for volunteers. In the seven countries GAO visited, development of volunteer assignments was very uneven; some volunteers had little to do while others were not receiving needed support from host-government agencies. This has contributed to the fact that one of every three volunteers leaves the Peace Corps before the end of their 2-year assignments. Finally, the Peace Corps has given low priority to teaching Americans about foreign cultures.

GAO makes several recommendations aimed at improving Peace Corps performance in these areas.

Principal Findings

The 10,000- Volunteer Objective

The Peace Corps began the 1980s with about 5,000 volunteers. During the decade, it attempted to increase the number of volunteers in response to the 1985 congressional mandate to attain 10,000 volunteers. However, the Peace Corps has been unable to make significant progress toward achieving this objective. As the decade closed, it had about 6,300 volunteers. To attain this objective, it must overcome a number of problems discussed in this report.

First Goal: Providing Trained Manpower

The Peace Corps has not fully implemented mechanisms to attract volunteers with scarce skills, such as doctors, veterinarians, education specialists, and crop extensionists. Instead, it continues to rely heavily on recruitment methods that have been used to attract generalists. The agency also does not provide a career path or adequate incentives to recruiters to seek scarce skill volunteers. In light of this difficulty, the Peace Corps has instructed its overseas staff to encourage countries not to request volunteers with scarce skills. While the agency meets nearly 100 percent of the requests for generalists, it fills only about 60 percent of requests for individuals with scarce skills with volunteers having those skills. Another 24 percent are filled with "almost match" volunteers who do not fully meet Peace Corps criteria for the assignments.

The Peace Corps does not consistently develop adequate assignments for volunteers. At the seven Peace Corps posts GAO visited, many volunteers were in assignments that had no specific tasks, objectives, or responsibilities. In some cases, local supervisors were unaware that volunteers

were coming and had nothing prepared for them. Some volunteers spent 6 to 12 months of their 2-year tour developing their own assignments. GAO also found that some volunteers (1) lacked adequate language skills, (2) did not have local counterparts to carry on activities once they left, (3) were in assignments that had little developmental impact, (4) were in positions that could be filled by local nationals, or (5) were assisting wealthy people. These programming difficulties contribute to the relatively high rate of early returns. About 33 percent of Peace Corps volunteers leave before the end of their 2-year assignments. One-half of the older volunteers do not complete their assignments.

Second Goal: Teaching Foreign People About America

In general, GAO believes the Peace Corps has been successful in achieving its second goal because volunteers work directly on a people-to-people basis in the small towns and rural areas of the countries served. However, it would accurately reflect America's diverse population, and thereby better attain its second goal, by attracting more minorities to serve as volunteers. As of January 1989, only seven percent of Peace Corps volunteers were minorities. According to Peace Corps officials, attracting minorities is difficult because they sometimes graduate from college with heavy debts and perceive the Peace Corps as a largely "white middle-class" institution. The Peace Corps has established minority recruitment goals but has not provided recruiters the incentives nor the tools for achieving these goals. Also, until recently, there have been few minorities in the upper levels of Peace Corps management to serve as recruitment role models.

Third Goal: Teaching Americans About Foreign Cultures

The Peace Corps operates a number of programs that seek to give returned Peace Corps volunteers the opportunity to teach Americans about foreign cultures; however, it has not devoted consistent effort or significant resources to this goal. The agency believed that, for the most part, the returned volunteers would perform this function on their own. Recently, returned volunteers formed a national association which seeks, among other things, to perform such "development education" activities. The Peace Corps gave the association $142,650 in grants and has assisted in conducting mailings, but it has not made full use of the association and its affiliated groups to attain its third goal.

Recommendations

GAO recommends that the Director of the Peace Corps

- redesign the agency's recruitment strategies and programs to (1) attract volunteers with scarce skills, including placing greater emphasis on targeted recruitment programs and providing greater support and incentives to recruiters and (2) attract minorities and
- implement a planning and evaluation system to improve the development of assignments for volunteers.

Agency Comments

As requested, GAO did not obtain official agency comments on a draft of this report; however, we discussed the report's contents with Peace Corps officials whose comments were incorporated in the report where appropriate.

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Abbreviations

AID	Agency for International Development
APCD	Associate Peace Corps Director
IPBS	Integrated Planning and Budgeting System
MPB	Management, Planning, and Budgeting
PATS	Programming and Training System
VIDE	Volunteers in Development Education

Introduction

Since its creation in 1961, the Peace Corps has worked to promote peace and friendship through assistance to others and intercultural exchange. Over the past 29 years, over 130,000 Peace Corps volunteers have sought to improve living conditions in close to 100 countries worldwide. As the Peace Corps embarks upon its fourth decade, we conducted a major review of the agency's operations and activities to identify ways in which it can better position itself to meet the challenges of the 1990s.

Peace Corps Goals and Methods

In accordance with section 2 of its enabling legislation (22 U.S.C. 2501), as amended,[1] the Peace Corps has sought to attain its primary objective of promoting world peace and friendship though the pursuit of three equal and distinct, but interrelated goals. The legislation states:

"[I]t is the purpose of this Act to promote world peace and friendship through a Peace Corps, which shall make available to interested countries and areas men and women of the United States qualified for service abroad and willing to serve, under conditions of hardship if necessary,

- to help the people of such countries and areas in meeting their needs for trained manpower, particularly in meeting the basic needs of those living in the poorest areas of such countries, and
- to help promote a better understanding of the American people on the part of the peoples served and
- a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people."

Unlike larger development organizations, such as the Agency for International Development (AID) and the World Bank, which design programs and contribute resources on a government-to-government basis, the Peace Corps has emphasized working on a people-to-people basis. Peace Corps volunteers work alongside host country counterparts in helping to improve living conditions in their communities, and become part of the communities at the grass-roots level. They learn the local culture and know how the local people perceive problems and solutions. They work with the community to attain its objectives by helping it find its own sources of financing and supplies and develop a plan to construct and maintain a project. By helping people to help themselves, the Peace Corps aims to build confidence and competence and teach them to solve their own problems.

[1]The Peace Corps was initially established under Executive Order 10924, March 1, 1961. The Peace Corps' enabling legislation was signed into law on September 22, 1961.

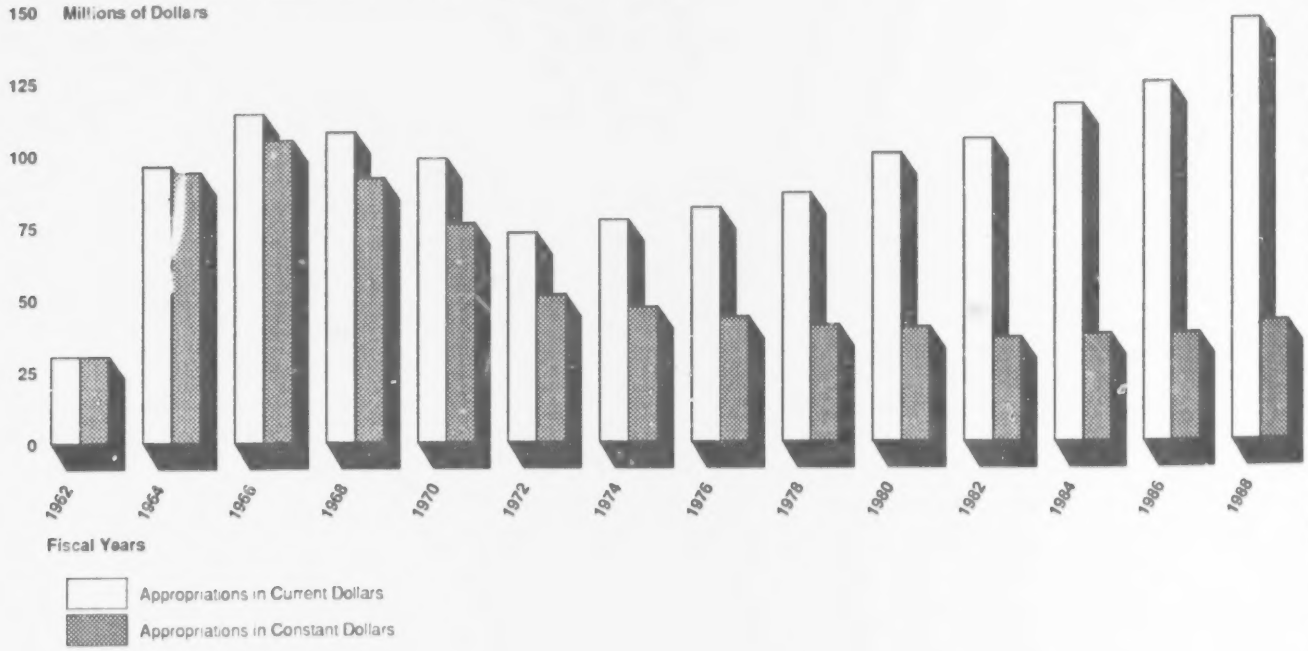
Figure 1.1: Volunteer Working on Fish Pond in Honduras

Many experts on the Peace Corps believe that the most valuable results of the Peace Corps program lie in the realm of international goodwill. By working hand-in-hand with the people of beneficiary countries, volunteers are encouraged to strive to develop mutual and equal relationships, creating respect and trust. In so doing, they give the people with whom they work an opportunity to learn firsthand about the American people and to dispel some myths and stereotypes about American culture and society. The volunteers also develop a deeper understanding of the local society and culture, which they can share with others when returning to the United States.

A Brief History of the Peace Corps

The Peace Corps has had three distinct periods in its history. During the 1960s, it focused largely on increasing the number of volunteers. The founders saw the Peace Corps as largely an intercultural agency. They did not place great emphasis on the development activities of the volunteers, who largely sought to attain the first goal by providing services directly to the people. During the early years, the agency's budget nearly quadrupled, from $30 million in fiscal year 1962 to $114 million in fiscal year 1966, and remained over $100 million for the remainder of the decade. (See figs. 1.2. and 1.3.)

Figure 1.2: Annual Appropriations in Current and Constant Dollars



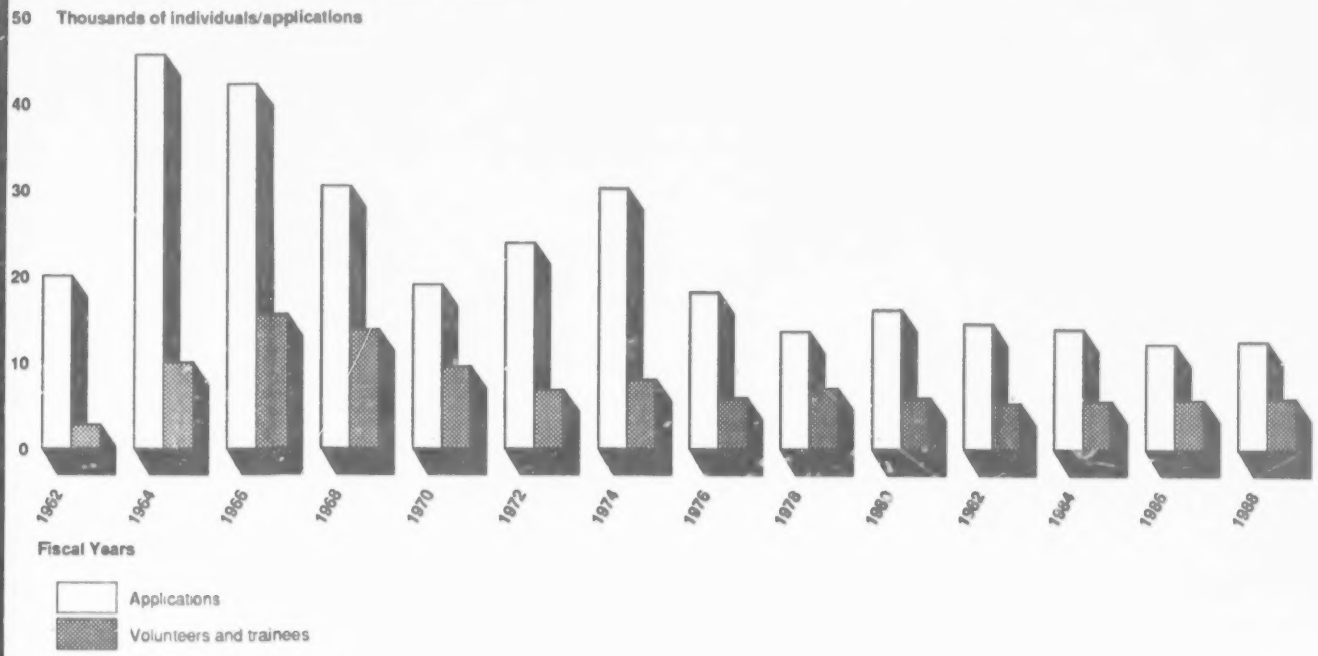
Figures for fiscal year 1984 includes $17 million ($16 7 million in constant dollars) in appropriated funds

Figures for fiscal year 1976 excludes transition quarter appropriation of $24 1 million (12 9 million in constant dollars)

Figures for fiscal year 1984 includes a $2 million ($638 000 in constant dollars) supplemental appropriation

Figures for fiscal year 1986 does not include $5 5 million ($1 6 million in constant dollars) that was sequestered under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P L 99 177)

Figure 1.3: Volunteers and Trainees, and Applications



Application figures include individuals who applied through the Peace Corps to serve with the United Nations Volunteer Program

Application figures for 1962-1970 are on a program year basis, which ran from September 1 through August 31. Subsequent figures are on a fiscal year basis

Application figure for 1976 includes 2,452 applications received during the transition quarter

The Peace Corps had 5,219 volunteers and trainees in 1987, which represents the fewest number of volunteers and trainees since 1962

The Peace Corps received 10,279 applications in fiscal year 1987, which represents the lowest total in the agency's history

The growth of the 1960s was followed by a period of retrenchment during the 1970s. In 1971, the President merged the Peace Corps with several other federally-sponsored volunteer programs into the ACTION agency. Because of this organizational change, Peace Corps' activities were given less priority and had less visibility. The number of volunteers and trainees decreased. During this period, the agency (1) began to focus more on improving the development activities of the volunteers and on providing more volunteers with specialized skills and (2) changed its method of operation from providing direct assistance, such

as digging wells or constructing latrines, to one of "capacity building," which sought to "help people help themselves." The Peace Corps' budget declined from $98.4 million in fiscal year 1970 to $86.2 million in fiscal year 1978, after which it rebounded in fiscal year 1979 to $99.1 million. In constant 1962 dollars, the Peace Corps' budget decreased 76.5 percent from $75.9 million in fiscal year 1970 to $43 million in fiscal year 1979.

During the 1980s, Peace Corps headquarters began to take a more active role in developing multicountry programs. The agency introduced the Africa Food System Initiative, a 10-year program in which multidisciplinary teams of volunteers work on projects designed to increase per capita food production on the continent. In 1987, it also initiated the Small Business Assistance Program to promote microenterprise development through financial and technical assistance. It also began to attempt to increase the number of volunteers in response to a legislatively mandated objective of having 10,000 volunteers. The Peace Corps budget for fiscal year 1989 was $153.5 million, as compared with $99.9 million in fiscal year 1980. Although it experienced a steady increase in its current dollar budget, its budget in constant dollars was well below the level of resources it had in 1966.

Early in the history of the Peace Corps, a provision was added to its enabling legislation which limits the time American staff who manage the program can be employed by the agency to 5 years. It was believed that this provision would lend dynamism to the agency and alleviate bureaucratic tendencies. The 5-year rule was subsequently amended to permit extensions for 1 year and an additional extension for 2 1/2 years for 15 percent of the American staff. Nevertheless, this employment limitation eliminates any possibility of a continuous long-term career in the Peace Corps. The volunteers that the Peace Corps recruits are normally given 2-year assignments. Thus, the composition of the Peace Corps is in fairly constant flux. The turnover of staff and volunteers have made the development of stable, constant, consistent programs more difficult.

The Peace Corps Today

By the end of fiscal year 1990, the Peace Corps expects to have 6,700 volunteers and trainees from all 50 states and U.S. possessions in about 75 countries. The average age of the volunteers is 30; 52 percent are women. About 40 percent of these volunteers are generalists (i.e., individuals with liberal arts educations and no special skills, such as carpentry or metalworking), 25 percent are educators; 28 percent are specialized professionals in fields such as business, engineering, health,

and social work; 17 percent have backgrounds in agriculture; and 3 percent are in skilled trades. They receive a $200 per month readjustment allowance at the end of their tours, as well as a small living allowance while in-country. As of early 1989, about 7.3 percent of the volunteers represented minorities.

Peace Corps volunteers are serving throughout the world. (See app. I.) They tend to be placed in developing countries, but not necessarily in the poorest countries of the Third World. For instance, there are no volunteers in Ethiopia or Bangladesh. The agency also maintains volunteers in countries that are relatively industrialized but still have pockets of poverty, such as Thailand. The average 1987 per capita Gross National Product of countries with Peace Corps volunteers as of July 1989 was approximately $640. The agency is now considering placing volunteers in Eastern European countries, such as Hungary and Poland.

The Peace Corps concentrates its development assistance in 10 program areas. (See table 1.1.) The largest program area in terms of percentage of volunteers is education, followed in order by agriculture, health, small-enterprise development, and natural resources. During fiscal year 1988, about 28 percent of the volunteers were assigned to education and about 15 percent to agriculture; others were assigned throughout the remaining areas.

Peace Corps has a headquarters staff and a management staff for each Peace Corps country. For each country, there is a Director and several Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs) who develop assignments for volunteers. Those APCDs who are American are subject to the 5-year rule. Host country national APCDs are not subject to the 5-year rule which, according to Peace Corps officials, has helped maintain some in-country management continuity.

Table 1.1: Peace Corps Program Areas

Education	More volunteers have served in education programs than in any other area. While English language instruction has been a major component, volunteers also teach mathematics, science, and other courses, train primary and secondary school teachers, and work with adults, the handicapped, and the unemployed.
Agriculture	Projects involve crop extension, soil science, animal husbandry, and agricultural economics research.
Health	Most volunteers in this area work within national primary health care systems on maternal and child health activities, nutrition, community health education, and water and sanitation projects.
Small Enterprise Development	This program, initiated in 1983, helps local communities identify and develop self-sustaining small- and micro-enterprise activities.
Urban and Youth Development	At least 15 urban-related programs seek to improve living conditions among unskilled, low income, and young city dwellers.
Fisheries	In 1988, volunteers in 32 countries sought to generate protein and income for local farmers through expansion of fresh water, marine, and inland capture fisheries.
Natural Resources	Natural resource projects include agro-forestry, environmental education, wildlife management, soil conservation, fuel-efficient stoves, and reforestation.
Women in Development	Peace Corps programming seeks to enhance the effectiveness of women, who provide 75 percent of the food and virtually all the child care in developing countries, through a broad range of economic activities.
Water and Sanitation	Volunteers working in this area seek to build and improve wells, dams, catchments, water systems, and latrines.
Energy	Peace Corps has 24 programs in 20 countries which involve such projects as fuel-efficient stoves, solar heat, and bio-gas conversion.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Chairman, Legislation and National Security Subcommittee, House Committee on Government Operations, requested that we conduct a broad review of Peace Corps activities, identifying ways for the Peace Corps to strengthen its operations and procedures to meet the challenges it will face in the 1990s. Specifically, we were asked to, (1) review actions the Peace Corps is taking to respond to the increasing requests by beneficiary countries for skilled volunteers, (2) determine whether the Peace Corps is developing adequate assignments for volunteers, (3) determine how the Peace Corps can strengthen its efforts to recruit minorities, and (4) ascertain what actions the Peace Corps is taking to promote a better understanding of other people on the part of the American people.

We interviewed individuals outside the agency who were knowledgeable about Peace Corps history, operations, and activities, including representatives from the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. We also consulted with three former Peace Corps directors—R. Sargent Shriver (who served as Peace Corps director during 1961-1966); Ohio Governor Richard F. Celeste (1979-1981); and the Ambassador to Norway, Loret Miller Ruppe (1981-1989).

At Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., we reviewed records and interviewed numerous Peace Corps officials, including the current Peace Corps Director. We reviewed documents regarding the Peace Corps, including our previous reports[2] on the operations of the agency; several published books on the Peace Corps; several works on Peace Corps history issued by the agency; and documents related to the agency's legislative history.

We also visited seven Peace Corps posts: Kenya and Senegal in Africa; Thailand and Fiji in the Far East; Honduras and Ecuador in Latin America; and the Leeward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean. Except for the Eastern Caribbean, Peace Corps management identified these posts as relatively large, well run posts, that were representative of Peace Corps' overseas operations as a whole. In contrast, management identified the post in the Eastern Caribbean as having serious administrative and assignment programming difficulties.[3]

At these posts, we reviewed pertinent documents and interviewed Peace Corps in-country staff, U.S. Embassy officials, host-government officials, and representatives of private voluntary organizations that work with volunteers. In each country, we conducted extensive interviews with a representative group of Peace Corps volunteers. We interviewed a total of 218 Peace Corps volunteers, using a structured interview format, from which we compiled information regarding the volunteers' experiences. We also visited several of their projects and interviewed the host-country people with whom they live and work.

[2]Changes Needed For a Better Peace Corps (ID-78-26; Feb. 1979), The Preparation of Volunteers For Peace Corps Service: Some Areas Need Management Attention (ID-81-25; May 1981), and Peace Corps: A Statistical Profile, (GAO/NSIAD-89-174FS; July 1989).

[3]Our report, Peace Corps: Reorganization in the Eastern Caribbean (GAO/NSIAD-90-93BR; March 1990), addresses organizational issues we found during our visit to the Eastern Caribbean.

To compare Peace Corps operations to those of other countries, we interviewed representatives of other countries' foreign volunteer organizations, including officials from Japan's foreign volunteer organization—Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers.

For fiscal years 1986 through 1988, we assessed the extent to which Peace Corps met requests for scarce skill and generalist volunteers and determined the proportion of requests that remained unfilled. We also conducted a statistically valid random sample[1] of volunteer placements to determine the proportion of positions the Peace Corps filled with volunteers that did not fully meet the qualification requirements for the assignment. We reviewed the agency's planning and evaluation procedures and assessed the process for identifying and programming assignments for volunteers. We also assessed Peace Corps efforts to initiate special targeted programs to recruit volunteers with scarce skills in demand by host governments. At the Peace Corps recruitment offices in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Seattle, we conducted extensive interviews with office management and recruitment personnel to obtain their views on Peace Corps recruitment efforts and procedures.

At the 1989 National Conference of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, held at Kent State University, we attended workshops and general meetings, and interviewed returned volunteers about their overseas experiences and their perceptions of the Peace Corps' current and future operations.

We conducted our review from April 1989 to January 1990 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

[1]To determine the number of cases in which Peace Corps matched candidates with the qualifications or near qualifications during fiscal years 1988 and 1989, we took a statistically valid random sample from approximately 6,500 placement files. In our sample, 24 percent of the "scarce skills" positions were filled by nominees without formally matched qualifications. Due to sampling variability, we are 95 percent confident that the actual percentage is between 19 percent and 29 percent.

The 10,000-Volunteer Objective and the Need to Adapt to New Realities

Significantly increasing the number of volunteers, which was congressionally mandated in 1985, may not be a realistic objective for the Peace Corps for the next several years. Meeting this objective will require greater funding than the Peace Corps has received in recent years. In addition, developing countries are becoming increasingly demanding with regard to the skills and qualifications of volunteers. Before the Peace Corps is ready to double in size, it should first improve its systems to recruit volunteers and develop assignments for them. These management issues are discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

The 10,000-Volunteer Objective

In 1981, the Peace Corps was separated from ACTION and again became an independent agency. In 1985, it began focusing on increasing the number of volunteers. The International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985 added a provision to the Peace Corps' enabling legislation which established an objective of 10,000 volunteers for the agency. This provision states:

"The Congress declares that it is the policy of the United States and a purpose of the Peace Corps to maintain, to the maximum extent appropriate and consistent with programmatic and fiscal considerations, a volunteer corps of at least 10,000 individuals."

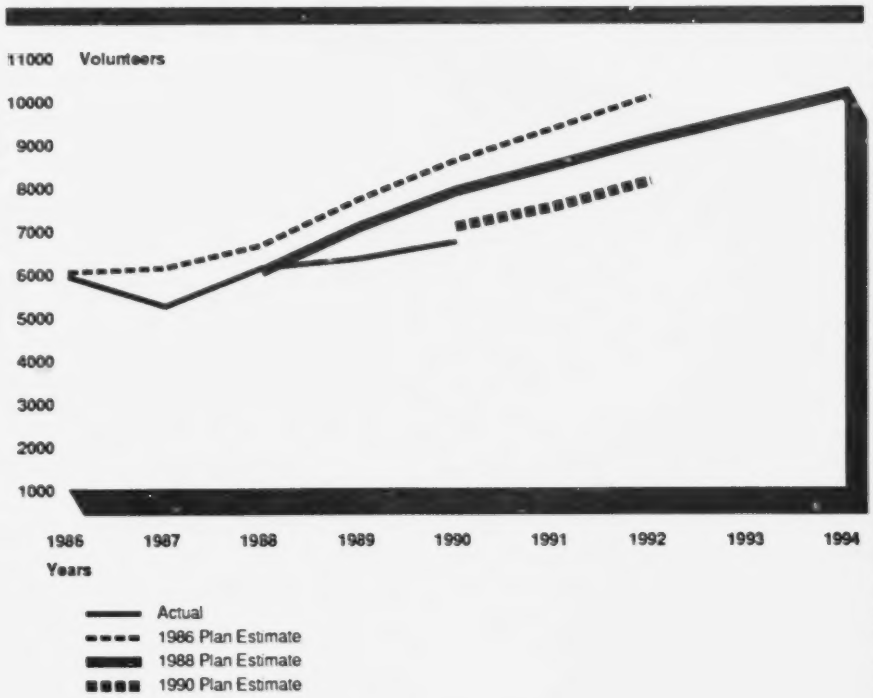
Achieving this objective would have represented nearly a doubling of the number of volunteers and trainees in the Peace Corps in 1985. While the legislation did not establish a timetable for reaching this objective, the Peace Corps Director and congressional leadership, in a subsequent exchange of letters, established a target date of 1992.

The Peace Corps director at that time stated on several occasions that the agency was prepared to attain this objective and, during April 1988 hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, stated: "Today, all through this agency, the staff is filled with a vitality unseen in many years. We are poised, prepared and moving forward toward the 10,000 volunteer goal you set forth in the 1985 public law."

It soon became apparent, however, that the 10,000-volunteer objective was not attainable in the established time frame. Despite growth in its budget from $99.9 million in fiscal year 1980 to $153.5 million in fiscal year 1989, the agency never began to approach the 10,000-volunteer objective. The number of volunteers, which was 6,264 in fiscal year 1985, increased slightly to 6,312 in fiscal year 1989. In 1988, the agency submitted a new plan to the Congress that envisioned reaching the

10,000-volunteer objective by 1994. However, statistics on the number of volunteers and trainees in the field demonstrate that the agency has not kept pace with expectations. As shown in figure 2.1, the agency to date has not been able to attain any of the three estimates it established to reach the 10,000 volunteer objective.

Figure 2.1: Actual Versus Estimated Number of Volunteers, 1986- 1994



The Peace Corps now hopes to have 10,000 volunteers by 1995 and approximately 12,000 by 1996; however, its fiscal year 1991 budget request indicates that it will more likely achieve these goals by fiscal years 1997 and 1999, respectively. The Peace Corps is preparing to open operations in 9 countries in fiscal year 1990, and anticipates opening operations in another 20 countries during fiscal years 1991 and 1992 and another 40 countries during fiscal years 1993 to 1996.

Funding Constraints

On several occasions, the Peace Corps Director has stated that the funding levels have been inadequate to attain a 10,000-volunteer force.

Despite receiving the appropriations originally requested, the agency was falling far short of its 10,000-volunteer objective. In February 1989, hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Peace Corps Director stated: "[The Peace Corps] should be able to have 10,000 volunteers out there by 1992, but it will take an orderly growth in budget. And it was more than we had projected two and three years ago."

Nevertheless, during June 1989, the new Peace Corps Director testified before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Committee on Appropriations, that the agency's budget request for fiscal year 1990 would not be sufficient to permit it to keep pace with the growth needed to attain the 10,000-volunteer objective by 1992 and cited several factors.

First, the Peace Corps had originally estimated its budget needs in current rather than constant dollars, neglecting to include inflation. Second, the agency had experienced escalating medical costs over the past few years. The Peace Corps expenses under the Federal Employment Compensation Act, which governs compensation provided to federal employees and Peace Corps volunteers for service-related illnesses and injuries, more than doubled from fiscal years 1983 to 1989, from $3.7 million to $7.5 million, and reflected a 17-percent increase from fiscal year 1988 to fiscal year 1989. The agency's expenses under the Foreign Affairs Administrative System have also escalated. The State Department uses this system to provide administrative support to agencies operating overseas. While the agencies can decide to what extent they use the services, the State Department determines the cost for each service. These expenditures, for the most part, cannot be controlled by the Peace Corps. Finally, the agency did not foresee the erosion of the foreign exchange value of the dollar which, in effect, increased the costs of its overseas operations.

The Changing Needs of the Developing World

The changing nature of the developing world is also affecting the Peace Corps attainment of its 10,000-volunteers objective. When the Peace Corps was created, recruitment and programming were relatively easy; the agency would recruit generalists and ask them to perform "community development" work. Now, as Peace Corps beneficiary countries become more developed and capable of identifying their own needs, they are asking for volunteers with more specialized skills. They often have long-term development plans and ask for more skilled volunteers to assist in fulfilling them.

We found that other countries' volunteer services are already more development-oriented than the Peace Corps. Virtually all of the nations of Europe, as well as Canada, Japan, and a number of advanced developing countries, such as Indonesia and Nigeria, have overseas development services. In addition, the United Nations operates an international volunteer service. These services tend to be smaller and much more technically oriented than the Peace Corps. They tend to seek trained specialists to fill specific needs of developing countries and, thus, are better able to meet the needs of these countries for skilled volunteers. For instance, the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers provides technical skills in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, civil engineering and architecture, health and welfare, education, and sports.

Nevertheless, many individuals with whom we spoke, while acknowledging that the foreign volunteer services reflect the developing world's need for more highly trained volunteers, would not hold up these organizations as a model for the Peace Corps. The other service organizations tend not to share the Peace Corps' intercultural goals. While their volunteers may have more specialized training, they do not have the cross-cultural responsibilities of Peace Corps volunteers nor do they generally operate at the grass roots level as do Peace Corps volunteers, characteristics that contribute to the uniqueness of the Peace Corps.

Peace Corps officials have stated that expansion must proceed with a focus on program quality and the availability of recruits. However, the agency is still in the process of revising its operations to meet this changing demand. The Peace Corps experiences difficulty, at the current level of volunteers, in recruiting the skilled volunteers requested by beneficiary countries and ensuring that they have well-structured assignments. The agency is attempting to evolve from one that provides generalists with certain types of life experiences and some technical training to one that increasingly fills countries' requests for generalists and specialists with moderate to extensive technical experience in certain areas, thus achieving a balance between the two types of volunteers in response to country needs.

Conclusions

The Peace Corps cannot attain the 10,000-volunteer objective incrementally employing a "business as usual" approach. The agency first needs to obtain the funding and put into place the mechanisms needed to attract, train, and place 10,000 volunteers that will meet the needs of beneficiary countries. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the Peace Corps must change the way it recruits volunteers and develops

assignments in-country for them. The agency itself has deferred the timetable for the 10,000- volunteer objective. After the Peace Corps has resolved these management concerns, it may appropriately attempt to develop more realistic budgets and plans for reaching the 10,000-volunteer objective.

Peace Corps Can Improve Attainment of Its First Goal by Strengthening Recruitment

The Peace Corps' system for recruiting, selecting, and placing volunteers has not been able to fully meet countries' requests for highly skilled (scarce skill) volunteers.[1] Beneficiary countries have increasingly requested volunteers with scarce skills—often with advanced degrees—but, because of its recruitment strategies, the Peace Corps has been unable to recruit enough of these individuals. Since the 1960s, the Peace Corps' recruiting efforts have largely focused on generalists. Peace Corps headquarters has not adequately supported specific programs to increase scarce skill trainees but has attempted to match recruits who do not necessarily meet the skills and/or qualifications requested by the beneficiary countries. Its area recruitment offices lack the information, time, and human and financial resources needed to recruit scarce skill volunteers. Further, until recently, it offered no incentives or rewards for recruiting such individuals.

The Recruitment and Placement Process

Peace Corps' Volunteer Delivery System consists of recruiting, selecting, and placing candidates in assignments for 2-year tours of service. During fiscal years 1986 to 1988, Peace Corps' approximately 100 recruiters sought to recruit an average of about 2,930 recruits. The Office of Recruitment has primary responsibility for determining whether a recruit has the qualifications to become a trainee. Once a recruiter determines that an applicant meets the qualifications of an assignment area, the recruiter nominates the applicant to serve as a trainee/volunteer and forwards the applicants file to the evaluation unit at Peace Corps headquarters for review.

The evaluation officer clarifies areas of question or concern, and obtains any necessary documentation to ensure that needed application, legal, and medical reviews can be conducted. The Office of Medical Services ensures that the individual is physically capable of serving in the Peace Corps. The Office of General Counsel ensures that the individual is clear of any actual or potential noncompliance with financial or legal obligations. Upon reviewing each applicant's file and determining that each candidate meets Peace Corps' qualifications, the evaluation officer forwards the complete file of each "qualified nominee" to the Office of Placement.

[1]Peace Corps defines "scarce skill" volunteers as those in assignment areas such as crop extension, home economics, or unique skills areas in which the agency has experienced difficulty recruiting due to the lower availability of such candidates.

The Office of Placement is responsible for matching and selecting nominees to serve as trainees. Placement officers (1) match qualified nominees to specific job requests, (2) invite the candidates to serve in the Peace Corps, and (3) invite the individuals to pre-departure training events for orientation. The final decision on trainees' selection to serve as Peace Corps volunteers rests with the country staffs, who base their decision on the trainees' performance during the 6 to 8 weeks of in-country pre-service training.

Countries Requesting Scarce Skill Volunteers

Countries have increased their requests for scarce skill volunteers, such as doctors, veterinarians, education specialists, and crop extensionists. Peace Corps data show that from 1981 through 1989 requests for scarce skill volunteers ranged from 54 to 63 percent of total requests. In fiscal year 1989, for instance, an estimated 61 percent of requests were for scarce skill volunteers. Even these are understated, because initial country requests actually reflect greater demand for scarce skill volunteers. Peace Corps in-country staff are encouraged by headquarters to negotiate with host countries to arrive at "easier-to-fill" requests (i.e., requests for someone without the skills or qualifications originally requested by the beneficiary country).

Peace Corps has been unable to meet even these "easier-to-fill" requests, however. While Peace Corps' overall placement rate has improved considerably since fiscal year 1981, when it met 60 percent of the scarce skill requests, it continues to experience difficulty meeting such requests. From fiscal years 1986 to 1988, Peace Corps filled about 84 percent of requests for scarce skill volunteers, whereas it filled 98 percent of requests for generalists. About one-quarter of these scarce skill requests were met using an "almost match" process, whereby the agency matches recruits that do not have all the skills and qualifications established by the Peace Corps for that assignment.

Headquarters Recruitment Initiatives

The Peace Corps initiated several efforts during the 1980s to better meet host countries' needs for scarce skill volunteers. These included the University Collaboration and Associate Volunteer programs and a 2-year agreement with AID to establish a Farmer-to-Farmer program. However, due to management, staff, and budget limitations and difficulties, these efforts have not met expectations. Instead, the Peace Corps has had to rely on more loosely matching volunteers to assignments (not guaranteeing requests for certain scarce skills and instituting an "almost

match" procedure) in response to increasing requests for skilled volunteers.

Targeted Programs

The University Collaboration program seeks to (1) recruit better trained individuals in scarce skill areas, (2) develop relations with universities and the private sector, and (3) promote recruitment of minorities. Through this program, Peace Corps established cooperative agreements with eight[2] universities over fiscal years 1987 through 1989. This program affords interested graduate students an opportunity to combine their academic studies with 2 years of Peace Corps service.

Peace Corps has placed very few volunteers through the University Collaboration program. Since Peace Corps has not monitored, documented, or evaluated this program, we are unable to determine exactly how many individuals have been placed each year, in what countries, the types of assignments, or how well their tours of service have fared. During fiscal year 1989, Peace Corps placed 8 volunteers and 25 potential volunteers were "in the pipeline."

Peace Corps established an Associate Volunteer program in October 1987. The program provides an opportunity for highly skilled U.S. citizens to serve as volunteers for 3 to 18 months; however, it met with an unsteady existence due to staff and budget cuts during fiscal years 1988 and 1989. The number of host country requests for Associate Volunteers for fiscal year 1989 tripled to over 350, from 108 in fiscal year 1988. During fiscal year 1988, only 10 volunteers were placed in 7 countries under the Associate Volunteer program. In fiscal year 1989, Peace Corps placed 51 Associate Volunteers in 7 countries.

Peace Corps established its Farmer-To-Farmer program in September 1987 for a 2-year trial period. The program, funded by AID, sought to provide 50 agricultural expert consultants each year to farmers and Peace Corps volunteers with whom they work. The Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance, a private, nonprofit organization recruits and funds American farmers or agricultural professionals to work on Peace Corps projects. Extended through December 1989, the program operated on a budget of $392,700 and had two full-time employees to coordinate and fill requests from the field largely through the nonprofit

[2]The universities include: Rutgers—the State University of New Jersey-Camden, Boston University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of South Carolina, University of the District of Columbia, Colorado State University, Yale University, and Texas Woman's University.

agency's recruitment network. We noted that the program had a slow and difficult implementation and did not meet its initial objective of placing 50 volunteers in each year but, instead, placed a total of 28 consultants during fiscal years 1988 and 1989.

There also is a proposed "ROTC-style" program which we believe would strengthen Peace Corps efforts to attract scarce skill and minority volunteers. Introduced in the House of Representatives on February 9, 1989, this proposal, called the "Peace Corps Volunteer Education and Demonstration Program Act" (H.R. 985), would permit Peace Corps to competitively select undergraduate students who complete 2 years of study toward a bachelor's degree and agree to serve as a volunteer at least 3 years. Special consideration would be given to minority students and to students who work in specialized areas related to Peace Corps' scarce skill needs. Students would complete a training program through Peace Corps while completing their degrees at their respective institutions. Each student would receive educational benefits covering tuition, room and board, books and fees. Near the end of their college studies, Peace Corps would provide students with an assignment related to their area of study and concentration and where Peace Corps has ongoing and increasing needs.

Loosening Match Procedure

Because of the problems with attracting scarce skill recruits, Peace Corps sought to increase its flexibility in meeting scarce skill requests. The Peace Corps (1) informed its country staff that it would not guarantee filling requests for volunteers in certain scarce skill areas or those with language requirements, (2) instituted an "almost match" procedure, and (3) expanded its assignment area skill requirements.

An internal Peace Corps agreement was worked out between the Office of International Operations and the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, whereby the recruitment office would not guarantee placement in five scarce skill areas: (1) agriculture education, (2) industrial arts, (3) home economics (degreed), (4) health and nutrition (degreed), and (5) university English teacher. The agreement also stressed to Peace Corps overseas staff that requests would be better met if they permitted the applicant to have the minimum skill requirements and no foreign language skills. The recruitment office asked the International Operations Office to work with countries to revise assignments for easier recruitment.

In an effort to provide placement officers with the ability to more loosely match applicants' skills and qualifications to skill requirements, Peace Corps instituted the "almost match" process during the early 1980s. In cases where the qualified nominees' skills and qualifications nearly match an assignment description's skill requirements, or the qualified nominee has skills and/or experience equivalent or similar to the qualifications required, recruiters or placement officers could consider the applicant an "almost match" to a particular assignment. For example, an individual may have been skilled in an assignment area but without the degree requested by the beneficiary country, or the individual may have had fewer than the required credits in the assignment area. Our analysis of a sample of matched scarce skill volunteers for fiscal years 1988 and 1989 indicated that 24 percent were almost matched placements.

The Peace Corps also broadened the skill requirements for certain assignments. Peace Corps instituted "Assignment Area Skill Clusters"—education and skill requirements by assignment area—during the late 1970s or early 1980s. These skill cluster requirements are used by recruiters and placement officers to match recruits to assignments. The first major revision to the skill cluster requirements occurred during July 1989, when 35 of 55 skill clusters were revised to broaden the level of qualifications requirements. The majority of the revisions occurred in scarce skill assignment areas.

In April 1990, after we had completed our review, the Peace Corps informed us that, beginning with fiscal year 1990, each area office was assigned several scarce skill program areas on which to focus recruitment activities. The agency also informed us that, in conjunction with its new emphasis on scarce skill recruiting, it redefined its scarce skill assignment areas. It said that of the 60 new assignment areas, 44 are defined as scarce skills and 16 are defined as generalists. The Peace Corps said that, using these new definitions, it is currently filling about 90 percent of scarce skill requests. Because these actions were taken after we completed our review, we have not evaluated their effectiveness.

Peace Corps Can Better Assist Recruiters

Peace Corps recruiters encounter difficulty recruiting scarce skill volunteers largely because they use a strategy of recruiting undergraduate students at liberal arts colleges and, hence, generate an abundance of applications from generalists. They do not make adequate use of the targeted programs that aim to attract scarce skill recruits.

Recruiting to Attract Generalists

The Peace Corps' recruiting is "generalist-driven," and recruitment personnel do not have the resources or opportunities needed to engage in innovative recruiting to target and attract scarce skill recruits. All the recruitment area offices we visited had recently engaged in more targeted recruiting, but they informed us that they are limited in their efforts because they have insufficient information on how to recruit scarce skills.

Recruitment campaigns have primarily focused on targeting generalists because prior to fiscal year 1990, the agency required recruiters to produce a certain number of nominees and trainees within a given season. As a result, the recruiters' incentive was to meet overall goals for trainees rather than engage in "targeted" recruiting. Recruiters typically visited the same generalist-producing schools they visited in the past.

Additional Recruitment Problems

The recruitment process also faces systemic problems that detract from recruiters' ability to target scarce skill volunteers. First, the new Management, Planning, and Budgeting (MPB) process sets scarce skill goals, but information and human and financial resources needed to target scarce skill recruits are not provided. Second, until recently, the Peace Corps did not offer recruiters incentives or rewards for scarce skill recruiting. Third, advertising is not directed toward recruiting scarce skill volunteers. And finally, the high turnover rate among recruiters impedes recruitment efforts.

During fiscal year 1989, the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection instituted the MPB process, a new approach to planning and budgeting for recruitment activities based on assignment area goals, including scarce skill and generalist goals. Specifically, the process requires recruitment managers to plan and budget for recruitment activities to meet trainee goals. Although recruitment personnel expressed optimism about the new approach, they voiced concerns about its implementation due to the emphasis on goals without accompanying information needed to establish scarce skill recruitment campaigns. Also, while the MPB process establishes goals for recruiting scarce skill volunteers, the goals are based on the small number of trainees from previous years. This means that recruiters will continue to recruit to past goals instead of developing new markets of potential scarce skill candidates and changing their overall approach to recruitment.

Recruiters and managers have difficulty targeting scarce skill recruits, largely because they lack demographic and market data. Some recruiters

indicated that they do their own research to determine which scarce skill organizations exist and which colleges or universities have larger concentrations of certain academic degree areas. Peace Corps headquarters expects the area offices to develop demographic and market data. We found, however, that the designated responsibility for this function was unclear.

According to personnel at the offices we visited, they have neither the time nor the systems to track and monitor recruitment and/or advertising activities to determine if targeting scarce skills was making a difference in their office. Recruitment personnel stated that the offices do not have procedures to monitor and track nominee and trainee production to match with recruitment goals.

Financial constraints also impeded recruiters' ability to conduct targeted recruiting. According to the Peace Corps recruitment office, it had to reduce funding for all activities, other than salaries and overhead costs, about 8 to 9 percent for fiscal year 1990.

Peace Corps' officials acknowledged that they needed better and more targeted advertising for scarce skill recruits to attract these highly skilled individuals. At the time of our review, the Peace Corps was in the process of examining this issue and meeting with a consulting firm about ideas for targeted advertising for scarce skill and minority trainees.

Another problem is that the high turnover rate among recruiters, averaging 18 months, limits efforts to attract scarce skill volunteers. We were told that this high turnover rate occurs for several reasons, but that the pay level and lack of long-term career potential is the most prevalent. Peace Corps recruiters are hired at Foreign Service pay level seven (currently about $20,400). They work long hours and, until recently, worked on weekends without compensation. Because of the salary, many recruiters told us that they have no incentive to stay with Peace Corps very long. Recruiters overwhelmingly told us that they would be more productive and would consider staying with the Peace Corps longer if they saw that recruiters were given opportunities to (1) refine their organizational management, leadership, and administration and/or budget skills and (2) receive additional recruiter training and needed computer training to enable them to use their office's current software and hardware.

Recruiters must develop and maintain relationships with universities and colleges, particularly in scarce skill areas, to ensure long-term recruitment success for highly skilled candidates. However, recruiters are unable to build long-term relationships due to the high recruiter turnover rate and their busy workloads, which keeps them from documenting recruitment approaches and activities that work to attract scarce skill candidates.

In April 1990, Peace Corps officials told us that they have now begun to instruct recruitment offices to focus all of their energies on developing scarce skill and minority applicants for Peace Corps service. They stated that the flow of generalist applicants can easily be maintained with little effort. They also told us that tracking and monitoring production resulting from recruitment and advertising has become a major focus at the area offices and at headquarters. Also, headquarters has increased its emphasis on the use of incentives to promote enhanced activity in recruiting scarce skill and minority applicants. Because these actions were taken by the Peace Corps after we had completed our review, we have not evaluated their effectiveness.

Rapid Application Processing Initiative

Many recruits, particularly those who are highly skilled, are unwilling to wait the 6 months to 1 year it normally takes the Peace Corps to place volunteers in a country. Recently, in an effort to increase the numbers of scarce skill and minority recruits, Peace Corps began a procedure for placing such candidates more quickly than generalist volunteers. This procedure, called "Rapid Applicant Processing Initiative" was developed to assist in resolving the following problems: (1) the underrepresentation of Peace Corps' minority volunteers, (2) lower trainee production relative to the higher demand for trainees in scarce skill areas, and (3) the potential that scarce skill and minority volunteers would accept outside offers before Peace Corps offers them an invitation. Under this proposal, minorities and scarce skill candidates would be processed immediately and, if cleared, would be offered a position up to 1 year in advance of their overseas departure rather than 6 months before, as is presently the case.

Conclusions

Improved recruiting could help the Peace Corps strengthen its ability to meet its first goal of providing trained men and women to beneficiary countries. To do so, however, the agency needs to strengthen its overall recruitment system, particularly by supporting targeted approaches to recruitment. Recruitment area offices lack the necessary guidance from

Washington, as well as information, human, and financial resources to efficiently recruit those with scarce skills. Consequently, their efforts until very recently had been concentrated on recruiting generalists.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Director of the Peace Corps:

- redesign the agency's recruitment strategies and programs to attract volunteers with scarce skills;
- provide recruitment personnel with demographic and market studies to help recruiters to better understand their availability market(s) and allow them to define and target their recruitment and advertising efforts, particularly for scarce skill recruits; and
- provide recruiters with incentives and rewards for meeting and/or exceeding their targeted scarce skill recruitment goals.

In view of the problems the Peace Corps has encountered in recruiting sufficient numbers of minorities, as discussed in chapter 5, these recommendations should be implemented in conjunction with the recommendations made in that chapter regarding the need to address equal employment opportunity concerns.

Peace Corps Can Improve Attainment of Its First Goal by Strengthening Assignment Programming

Until recently, the Peace Corps had no centrally managed policy for evaluating and monitoring assignments. Instead, Peace Corps relied upon various mechanisms for evaluating programs, none of which required country management to take actions on the basis of the evaluations. As a result, in-country managers were, for the most part, on their own to develop evaluation or monitoring systems for their programming. While we observed many worthwhile assignments, we also visited with volunteers who had little or nothing to do, or who had spent 6 to 12 months of their 2-year tours developing their own assignments. We also interviewed volunteers who were not receiving sufficient host government support or lacked adequate language skills to conduct their assignments. These problems contribute to the relatively high rate of volunteers who return before the end of their tours.

The Peace Corps recently implemented a comprehensive assignment programming and training system, which aims to alleviate many of the above problems. This system has not been in place long enough to assess its effectiveness. However, if properly implemented, we believe the system will be a valuable aid to improve programming and assignment management.

Program Planning and Evaluation

In its 1989 Congressional Presentation, the Peace Corps stated that "A special emphasis has been placed on developing sound programming methods, and then evaluating our programs to ensure that they maximize both the volunteers' efforts and better meet the countries' needs."

We found that, historically the Peace Corps lacked an adequate agency-wide program planning, evaluation, and follow-up system. Peace Corps headquarters has oversight responsibility over the posts but, until recently, has exercised little management authority. While an agency-wide planning system has existed for several years, knowledgeable Peace Corps officials indicated that many posts did not use it since it was not Peace Corps policy to do so. Each post was on its own to develop a planning system.

Program planning is very important for the Peace Corps because it needs to guarantee that there are real jobs for volunteers who go overseas, to see that they are capable of doing those jobs, and to make sure that the best possible support is available. This is especially true for scarce skill volunteers who, according to Peace Corps officials, tend to be more demanding of their assignments. The Peace Corps recognizes that its volunteers function most effectively in places or sectors that

have some institutional framework into which the volunteers can be placed. A January 11, 1989, Peace Corps-sponsored report entitled Partnership for Peace, stated that "Peace Corps is only now starting to deal on a program-wide basis with . . . programming and program support required by [scarce skill] volunteer[s]."

Peace Corps has started several evaluation or monitoring efforts over the years, beginning in the early 1960s with a group of journalists that had wide latitude and reported directly to the first Peace Corps director. Since then, the Peace Corps has had 16 separate evaluation systems, and started its seventeenth evaluation effort in February 1989. The Peace Corps conducted agencywide surveys for many years, but discontinued them in 1981. Since then, it has piloted several survey mechanisms, but never institutionalized them.

The Peace Corps depended largely upon the individual country posts to monitor and evaluate their activities, but Peace Corps officials acknowledge that these did not occur consistently. While the agency compiled information on accomplishments, the information was often inaccurate and was not used to evaluate the effectiveness of its operations. The agency required posts to submit Country Management Plans and Budgets, which included outlines of the posts programs, budget estimates, and "strengths and weaknesses" of current assignments. However, these were not developed in a methodologically rigorous and consistent manner and have been characterized as "guesstimates."

The Peace Corps also conducted ad hoc targeted assessments of programs that appeared to be experiencing problems, or to support a decision to initiate a new program. However, these were not consistently done and, according to one knowledgeable official, were not always applied to improve the projects. Some country directors brought together all volunteers at certain times to conduct self-assessments and, based on the information, set priorities. Also, some in-service training included evaluation of Peace Corps operations, and the close-of-service conferences contained some program evaluations. However, this information was not compiled and provided to headquarters. Some posts required volunteers to provide monthly reports but, again, no effort was made to compile this information and provide it to headquarters.

The lack of a consistent agencywide evaluation system hinders the resource and volunteer allocation process. Because there were no consistent and methodologically sound planning and evaluation mechanisms, resource allocations were not based on factual information regarding the

relative levels of success of the various country programs. Instead, allocation decisions were based upon the intuitive knowledge of the regional directors, with input from the desk officers at Peace Corps headquarters.

In January 1990, Peace Corps instituted the Integrated Planning and Budgeting System (IPBS) and Program and Training System (PATS). IPBS seeks to (1) promote long-range planning and ensure the program considerations drive the budget, (2) institutionalize the decision-making process, and (3) develop an annual operating plan. PATS aims to create an agencywide evaluation, and follow-up system. Use of this system by the posts, for the first time, has become Peace Corps policy. It requires the posts to rigorously develop assignments to ensure that they provide volunteers with a positive, well-structured working environment. It also requires posts to plan and design a monitoring and evaluation system. and discusses how to collect and analyze information, present the results, and take follow-up action.

Assignment Programming

Peace Corps guidelines stipulate that Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs) should develop projects that are consistent with host countries' development goals and objectives, produce long- lasting results, and will be self-sustaining after the volunteers leave. To program volunteer work, Peace Corps directs its APCDs to develop long-term plans and then to establish what volunteer assignments are needed to meet plan objectives. APCDs are responsible for determining the specific tasks and volunteer skills required for each assignment and for preparing volunteer assignment descriptions using this information. These descriptions are then compiled with other information into the Country Management Plan and Budget, which is submitted to headquarters annually. Once projects have been established, APCDs are also responsible for monitoring volunteer work and evaluating overall progress in meeting project objectives.

The posts have substantial latitude in programming assignments for volunteers. Assignment programming refers to the planning and development of volunteer assignments and projects. The Peace Corps needs to program well-structured assignments that meet the skills and qualifications of the volunteers; one knowledgeable official characterized current Peace Corps programming as "vague to non-existent." Many volunteers arrive in country with no positions, or do not receive the support of the host government.

Poor Assignment Programming—a Long-Standing Problem

The agency has suffered from uneven assignment programming among posts, a problem that has persisted for many years. For example, a 1971 report on the Peace Corps, A Moment In History, The First Ten Years of the Peace Corps, stated: "[L]arger and more profound criticisms of sloppy programming, volunteers out of their depth, and host country unhappiness . . . were largely ignored to create a bigger and bigger Peace Corps."

A report entitled Twenty Years of Peace Corps reported that

> "[V]olunteers working in community development were sometimes 'parachuted' (sent out on their own to a local society with the vague invocation to 'participate.'). . . Many ended up feeling frustrated, disillusioned, and generally ineffective."

In February 1979, we reported[1] that many volunteers were dissatisfied with the quality of support they were receiving from the host governments, and a 1978 report entitled Peace Corps: Myths and Prospects also found that volunteers skills were being misused because of poor assignment programming. It stated: "In the absence of clearly defined programs, projects, or even volunteer assignments, let alone job descriptions, hundreds of [volunteers] roamed about in the host countries seeking meaningful activity."

In 1987, a pilot Peace Corps Program Evaluation Volunteer Survey of 664 volunteers in 9 countries found that a substantial number of volunteers were still not being kept occupied by their intended assignments. Over one-third of the volunteers recommended that the goals of their projects be revised. Many said that their projects lacked defined endpoints and objective indicators to measure progress; 20 percent reported that tasks were not adequately defined at the beginning of their assignments; and almost one-third said they could be easily replaced by host country nationals. A separate survey taken of volunteers in the Eastern Caribbean found that almost half of the respondents stated that their assignments did not have clearly defined goals. The October/November 1987 edition of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington D.C. Newsletter stated the following about volunteers in Central America: "There were too many volunteers working 20 minutes a day . . . They were often AWOL from their posts, and nobody in Peace Corps cared because there was nothing for those volunteers to do anyway."

[1] Changes Needed For A Better Peace Corps, (ID-78-26; Feb. 1979)

Many of the returned volunteers with whom we spoke at the Kent State Conference complained of poor assignment programming. For example, one volunteer said that when she arrived in Kenya there was no project for her and it took several months before one was developed. Some volunteers who were assigned to the Eastern Caribbean stated that they did not have real assignments and felt frustrated because they had nothing to do. A volunteer, who had worked in Korea, complained about not having the skills to perform his responsibilities as a special education therapist. A volunteer assigned to Lesotho during 1980 to 1982 stated that his project was delayed for a year after he arrived in country and he had to search around for his own project. A volunteer, who was in the Philippines from 1984 through 1986, found that he could not fulfill his assignment objective of helping villagers market their fish harvests because they barely harvested enough fish to feed themselves.

Current Assignment Programming Can Be Improved

Some volunteers continue to arrive in-country only to find that their assignments have not materialized, are very different from what they were led to believe, or that they would not be receiving the promised support from the host government. We found that three things usually happen in such situations. Volunteers who are highly motivated and who are fluent in the language are able to develop assignments very quickly. Volunteers who may be less motivated or who experience language difficulty take as long as 6 to 12 months to develop assignments. Others spend their 2 years unproductively or terminate their assignments before the end of their 2-year tour.

Poor assignment programming results, in part, because the in-country APCDs have more volunteers assigned than they can manage. While the Peace Corps' rule of thumb indicates that a manageable span of control would be 30 volunteers for each APCD, we found that some APCDs are responsible for as many as 47 volunteers. As a result, they have been unable to adequately develop programs or provide supervision and support for volunteers. A 1987 Peace Corps survey of volunteers found that they want more visits and better support from their APCDs. The 5-year rule, which limits the time an American staff member may work for the Peace Corps, results in high turnover among APCDs and contributes to this problem.

Poor language capability also presents a problem. The Peace Corps' enabling legislation states that

"No person shall be assigned to duty as a volunteer under this Act in any foreign country or area unless at the time of such assignment he possesses such reasonable proficiency as his assignment requires in speaking the language of the country or area to which he is assigned."

Despite this, APCDs are encouraged to submit trainee requests without language proficiency, thus impeding the Peace Corps' ability to ensure that volunteers have adequate language proficiency. Volunteers often graduate from training and are placed at their work site with only rudimentary understanding of the local language.

We found uneven assignment programming in the countries we visited. In Ecuador, agency officials and volunteers identified many problems. For example, some volunteers were unable to perform their assignments because they lacked adequate Spanish language proficiency. Some volunteers cited poor job definition as a problem.

In Honduras, the management staff wanted to focus on the quality of assignment programming but, instead, had to focus on developing assignments for the large number of recruits they receive. This detracted from their ability to strengthen assignment programming. The APCDs in Honduras experienced substantial span of control problems. They primarily liaisoned with ministry officials in the capital city and sent volunteers to their posts with only a letter of introduction. Some volunteers found that their local supervisors were unaware that they were scheduled to arrive and had nothing for them to do. Some assignments were poorly designed. Others had little development value. Some volunteers were actually working for wealthy land owners. Other volunteers stated that their assignments no longer served a useful purpose. Volunteers also complained about not having local counterparts who would continue the work of the volunteers after they departed. Some volunteers complained that their assignments actually took jobs away from local nationals. Many volunteers also cited language as a major problem in accomplishing their assigned objectives.

In the Leeward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean, agency officials and volunteers identified many problems concerning assignment programming. They stated that the Peace Corps was experiencing difficulty programming the types of development projects that actually permitted a transfer of skills from the volunteer to a local national. In a sense, the Peace Corps was simply providing free labor to help compensate for the "brain drain" experienced by that region of the world. We found that even host government officials sometimes considered volunteers to be

"free or cheap labor" because it costs them nothing to have a volunteer working for them. Some of the volunteers we interviewed saw themselves as cheap labor and found themselves working in roles that they did not expect when applying for the Peace Corps.

We found the situation in Kenya much like the situation in Honduras. Peace Corps staff relied heavily on volunteers to structure their own assignments rather that take a very active role in defining volunteer responsibilities and coordinating their efforts with the local supervisors. Peace Corps/Kenya did not have long-term plans that linked the efforts of successive generations of volunteers in program sectors and coordinate these efforts to accomplish program objectives. Both staff and volunteers in Kenya cited lack of job definition and program continuity as problems limiting volunteer effectiveness in contributing to Kenya's development. Some volunteers were frustrated because they could not find enough work. Several volunteers in Kenya did not believe that their work would be sustained by Kenyans after their departure.

The Peace Corps in Senegal, which previously used an approach similar to Kenya's, modified and improved its programming process. It developed long-term plans, which coordinate the efforts of a series of volunteers placed in the same geographical areas. It also identified specific tasks Peace Corps volunteers would perform during their tours. Senegal has modified the way it defines volunteer job responsibilities so that volunteers know specifically what they are supposed to do. It has also established work groups in each project so that volunteers with more technical training or experience can assist lesser skilled or experienced volunteers. APCDs have also made an effort to provide volunteers with defined job duties. Peace Corps staff informed us that volunteers on the modified assignments are more satisfied because they know what to do, and do not have so much unfilled time. Despite this progress, poor language skills remains a problem in Senegal.

The Thailand Peace Corps post also experienced some of the same difficulties we saw in some other countries. Once potential sites were selected, APCDs and program specialists visited the sites. During these visits, the staff briefed the potential Thai supervisor on the appropriate roles and responsibilities for volunteers and discussed the activities that the supervisor envisaged for the volunteer. Despite these positive actions, only about one-quarter of the volunteers we interviewed, who had 12 months or more experience, believed that they were significantly contributing to both the developmental and cross-cultural goals of the Peace Corps. Volunteers reported that the lack of job definition limited

their ability to contribute to their projects and that their limited language skills affected their ability to conduct their assignments. They also complained of not having counterparts. Since Peace Corps/Thailand does not conduct comprehensive program evaluations, it is difficult for the management staff to determine whether programs, particularly those that have been ongoing for many years, are still effective and meeting their goals and objectives.

In Fiji, most volunteers we interviewed believed that they were contributing to the Peace Corps' first and second goals. The Fiji Peace Corps post has a Memorandum of Understanding with the host government that provides for project monitoring and evaluation, specifies qualification and training of volunteers, volunteer supervision and support, project and performance review, and replacement or extension of volunteers. The Country Director requires written project plans for each project and task analyses for extension projects. Volunteers on Fiji were generally pleased with their assignments and the level of support from the Peace Corps and the host government.

Often, Peace Corps' coordination with other agencies or organizations provides structure needed by the volunteers. Peace Corps coordinates extensively with AID in such areas as micro-enterprise development. Volunteers are also working in collaboration with the staff of the World Bank, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and other U.S. government agencies, such as the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and State. They have also worked with such relief agencies as CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and Lutheran World Relief. These organizations tend to place great emphasis on up-front planning and goal setting. Such coordination could enable Peace Corps to enter into program relationships through which it could ensure regular assignments of volunteers according to jointly determined programs and institutional goals.

Inconsistent Programming Contributes to Early Returns

Weak programming contributes significantly to the number of volunteers who return before the end of their 2-year assignments. While there is no standard by which attrition can be judged, it is generally agreed by the Peace Corps that the current rates of attrition—33 percent overall and over 50 percent for older volunteers—are costly. The higher rate of returns for older volunteers is a particular problem for the Peace Corps, which created a task force in 1986 to address this issue. Older volunteers often experience difficulties in training, especially with language;

reduced ability to suffer difficult logistics; and a greater need for a correct fit between the assignment and the skills of the volunteer. Our interviews with numerous volunteers indicate that early returns not only hurt the volunteers, who may feel a sense of failure at not being able to complete their tours, but also the host government, which may have been counting on a volunteer to perform a specific task, and the Peace Corps, which is seen as unreliable.

Conclusions

The Peace Corps, at the time of our evaluation, had no systematic means of assuring that its individual country posts had comprehensive program plans for contributing to their host countries' development or maximizing the volunteers' usefulness and resourcefulness. We found inconsistencies in program planning efforts and poor utilization of volunteers among the countries we visited, logical outgrowths from the absence of systematic planning requirements. The majority of the posts we visited were not assuring that volunteers had assignments when they arrived in country, or that assignments were sufficiently structured and defined to give the volunteers clear understanding of their responsibilities. Peace Corps in-country staff, in some cases, were not assuring adequate local supervision or the presence of local counterparts that could carry on the work after the volunteers' departure. The result was instances of malassigned volunteers. Greater attention to program planning by the country posts would yield increased contributions to the host countries and better assignments for the volunteers. Various Peace Corps initiatives, such as the PATS and IPBS systems, may contribute to more systematic planning by the country posts, but at the time of our review these initiatives were not yet in place and functioning.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Director of the Peace Corps require that systematic procedures are put in place to ensure that each country post develop periodic, comprehensive program plans that, at a minimum, provide for

- clear, workable contributions to the countries' continuing development,
- well-developed assignment plans for the utilizition of volunteers upon their arrival in country,
- adequate oversight of the volunteers' projects,
- a host government commitment to support continuation of the work, and
- data upon which to evaluate the posts' and their volunteers' contributions.

The Peace Corps Can Better Achieve Its Second Goal Through Recruiting More Minorities

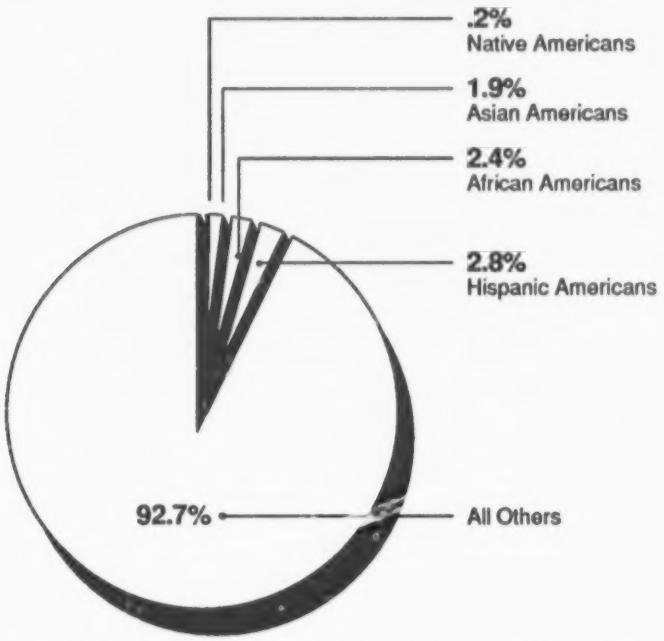
We found that the Peace Corps has been generally successful in achieving its second goal (i.e., to teach foreign peoples about the American culture). Peace Corps volunteers have accomplished this by working directly on a people-to-people basis in the small towns and rural areas where they serve. Nonetheless, full attainment of the second goal has been hampered by the Peace Corps' difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers of minorities to serve as volunteers. As a result, the Peace Corps does not show a complete picture of the diversity of American culture to the peoples of beneficiary countries. This is fundamentally a recruitment issue but, because it also has second goal and equal employment concerns, it is discussed separately in this chapter.

Peace Corps Needs to Show Diversity of American Culture

Peace Corps management recognizes that, as part of its second goal responsibilities, the agency needs to show the diversity of the American culture to peoples in beneficiary countries. This issue has become important to some Members of Congress. It was brought up on several occasions during the April 1989 confirmation hearings for the new Peace Corps Director, and the Congress has made it clear that it would like to see a better racial mix of volunteers.

While recognizing this responsibility, the agency has historically experienced great difficulty attracting sufficient numbers of minorities to serve as volunteers. The number of minorities as a proportion of total volunteers and trainees has never been above 10 percent. As shown in figure 5.1, in January 1989, minority volunteers and trainees comprised only about 7 percent of the total number of volunteers and trainees. Volunteers and Peace Corps management believe that increasing the numbers of minorities would help to show host countries that the United States is composed of very diverse groups of people.

Figure 5.1: Volunteers by Ethnic Background, January 5, 1989



The "All Others" category includes Americans from European, North Africa, or Middle Eastern backgrounds, and those not wishing to disclose their backgrounds.

Economic and Perception Reasons

According to Peace Corps officials, there are numerous reasons for the long-standing problem of not having adequate minority representation among volunteers. They point out that minorities generally have had a worse economic status than non-minorities. Consequently, minorities believe that they cannot afford to volunteer 2 years of their lives to Peace Corps service. In addition, private industry and the military are offering greater career opportunities and college tuition assistance for minorities than the Peace Corps.

Minorities also tend to see the Peace Corps as a white, middle-class organization. In 1985, the Ted Bates Advertising Company prepared a study of the attitudes toward Peace Corps among African American students and parents in five large cities in the United States. The study indicated that both parents and students tended to perceive Peace Corps volunteers as traditionally coming from upper middle-class, white families. They could not see an economic benefit to joining the Peace Corps. The study concluded that if Peace Corps was to become viable in the

minority community, it needed to provide the community with positive information and make clear that Peace Corps offered specific benefits for all Americans.

Peace Corps officials acknowledge that the small number of minorities in policy-making positions within the agency could have worsened this perception problem. There were no minorities in the 20 Senior Executive positions at the Peace Corps during 1988. Of the 52 Peace Corps Country Directors, 5 were minorities. Of the 103 American Associate Peace Corps Directors, 11 were minorities. In April 1990, the Peace Corps stated that this situation has improved since 1988, and that it now has 5 minorities in top management positions. The Peace Corps also informed us that it currently has 58 County Directors, 9 of which are minorities.

Peace Corps established a Minority Concerns Committee in 1984 to make recommendations on increasing the number of minorities in the agency. The group met for 6 months and developed a list of recommendations for Peace Corps management to improve the minority profile at the agency. We were unable to determine how management responded to those recommendations; however, after 6 months of operating, the committee was disbanded because management said it was too costly.

Racial Tensions In-Country

The perception that the Peace Corps is a white, middle-class agency is exacerbated by the sometimes negative reception from host country nationals some minorities receive when they arrive in-country. Information for fiscal years 1983 to 1985 indicates that the early return rate for minorities is slightly lower than for other volunteers. However, minority volunteers, including those with whom we spoke at the National Conference of Returned Volunteers, told us of their negative experiences in-country. Panelists at a workshop on minority issues concluded that minority volunteers, in addition to their regular needs as volunteers, have special needs as minorities. Peace Corps recruiters told us that volunteers who experience these problems discourage potential minority recruits from volunteering to serve.

Peace Corps was sufficiently concerned about this problem that it tasked a former volunteer to evaluate minority support services overseas. The study, completed in April 1989, stated that over the past 20 years, Peace Corps had heard concerns raised by minority volunteers that refer specifically to experiences in which there were culturally insensitive attitudes and behaviors within the Peace Corps community. Many minorities who experienced negative treatment while volunteers

commented that Peace Corps did not provide support services for them and that minorities are not adequately represented as staff or volunteers.

The report concluded that lack of communication among minority and non-minority volunteers; lack of awareness of minority issues; poor preparation of trainees to deal with certain behaviors and attitudes of foreign nationals, and the low numbers of minorities in Peace Corps overseas cause minority volunteers to either terminate their tour early, or have a far less rewarding Peace Corps experience. The report made a number of recommendations: (1) the Peace Corps should provide in-house sensitivity training for all volunteers on understanding U. S. subcultures as part of pre-service training; (2) sensitivity and cultural training should be offered to headquarters, recruitment, and overseas staff as part of development training; and (3) efforts should be made to incorporate a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the implementation of the recommendations. However, the Peace Corps took no actions on these recommendations.

Attracting Minorities

Many Peace Corps officials, returned volunteers, and others we interviewed generally agreed that the Peace Corps has not provided sufficient commitment to the recruitment of minorities. They point to the large reservoir of minority students at colleges and universities as evidence of minority availability. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Education show that in 1988 (the most recent year for which statistics are available), 13 million students were enrolled in institutions of higher learning, and that at least 2.4 million, or 18.5 percent, were minorities. In addition, many minorities not connected with colleges or universities have the skills and experience in demand by developing countries.

To determine the number of institutions with significant minority enrollment, we identified schools with an enrollment of 3,000 or more, and considered that those schools with 20 percent minorities have significant minority enrollment. We found that, as of fall 1986, 161 schools in 25 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia had significant minority student enrollment. Of those institutions, 91 had significant African American enrollment; 67 had significant Hispanic American enrollment; 14 had significant Asian American enrollment, and 2 had significant Native American enrollment. Our list of identified schools did not include most of the historically black or hispanic colleges and universities because total enrollment at many of these schools is less than

3,000 students. However, there are large numbers of smaller minority dominated institutions with potential candidates for Peace Corps.

Peace Corps has set a 10-percent, across-the-board minority recruitment goal for each of its area offices throughout the United States, but none of the offices have ever achieved that 10-percent minority goal. Peace Corps has not done an availability analysis to determine appropriate goals for each area office. Recruiters say management expects them to recruit minorities but, in many cases, they do not know how or where to recruit, and management does not give them information on minority recruitment. Peace Corps officials told us that the area offices are now meeting the 10-percent goal, though we could not verify this statement.

Many recruiters told us that Peace Corps needs to offer more incentives and guidance to recruiters, and that creating positions for minority coordinators in each recruitment region would help. Recruiting officials stated that because of the high turnover rate among recruiters, there is little time to establish "inroads" into the minority groups, associations, and communities in a effort to recruit minorities.

Without the incentives and tools to make a concerted effort to attract ethnic minorities, we found that area recruiters have taken some actions on their own, such as making contact with minority leadership on college campuses and placing advertisements in some of the minority newspapers. Their efforts are focused on minority institutions generally during special events such as Black History Month and Hispanic Week. However, some Peace Corps recruiters say that these are probably the worse times, especially if nothing has been done during the year to cultivate good will at these institutions. During these observances, various companies and the military services visit the institutions to recruit talented minorities, which puts the Peace Corps in direct competition with these companies.

Past Efforts and Studies

Over the years, the Peace Corps has undertaken several efforts and commissioned several studies to strengthen its ability to attract minorities. Perhaps the most notable effort at a systematic approach for minority recruitment, according to a former Peace Corps administrator, was the establishment of the Masters degree program at historically black colleges and universities. This program began as a two-phase, pilot program at Atlanta University in January 1970, in which the Peace Corps paid tuition and room and board costs for recruits who joined the program. The first group recruited for the program spent the spring

semester of 1970 at Atlanta University, 2 years in the Peace Corps as volunteer teachers in Ghana and Sierra Leone, and an additional year at the university, after which they received Masters degrees. A second group went to Liberia after spending the fall semester of 1970 at Atlanta University. However, Atlanta University withdrew from the program and it was transferred to Texas Southern University for the second phase. Of the 23 students who enrolled in the first program, 11 completed the program. Over a 3-year period (1971-1973), Texas Southern University recruited 58 students to become math and science teachers, and 39 of these students, or 69 percent, served in the Peace Corps. A Peace Corps evaluation of the Masters degree program concluded that, even though the program was costly, it had great potential for providing minority recruits to the Peace Corps.

Various committees established by the Peace Corps have developed several recommendations to improve minority recruiting. Peace Corps created a group called the Project Teams, which came together to discuss ideas for improving the minority participation in scarce skills areas and in Peace Corps generally. The group functioned for about one year before Peace Corps management decided it was not productive and disbanded the group.

In March 1987, a number of college and university presidents and Peace Corps senior staff held meetings at Stanford University to discuss, among other issues, Peace Corps' difficulty in recruiting representative numbers of minority group volunteers and ways to improve its approach to change this situation. They suggested that the Peace Corps enhance its image as a career path for minorities, appoint more minorities to policy-making positions, develop more undergraduate and graduate opportunities for exposure to overseas service, and expand internship programs for undergraduates.

During the mid-1980s, Peace Corps created a position aimed at helping to improve its relations with colleges and universities and making inroads with minority institutions. One recommendation that emerged from this effort was that Peace Corps identify influential persons at six or eight colleges and universities with large minority enrollments and educate them about the Peace Corps. Peace Corps officials thought this was a good idea but said the implementation of this kind of program would be too costly.

During the course of our review, the Peace Corps took several steps to address the problems discussed in this chapter. During early fiscal year

1990, the Peace Corps hired a Minority Recruitment Coordinator, set aside $200,000 specifically for minority recruitment, and tasked him to develop a Plan of Action for minority recruitment. As part of this plan, the coordinator is to prepare a budget for the next 3 years, and ask all of the Peace Corps area offices to submit strategies for minority recruitment. Further, the coordinator is to create from these strategies a National Minority Recruitment Strategy, and examine the current 10-percent minority goal for each office and make necessary adjustments. The coordinator plans to study the demographics and recommend setting goals based on where minorities are located. The Peace Corps has also identified minority recruitment coordinators in each area office. The agency is also taking action to address in-country racial tensions, including training and support for "cross-cultural consciousness raising," and has appointed a hispanic Deputy Director and African-American Associate Director for Management.

Conclusions

The Peace Corps needs to increase the number of minorities who serve as volunteers by devoting adequate time and resources to attracting minority volunteers and developing a realistic and comprehensive national strategy for recruiting them. Efforts to improve the Peace Corps' minority profile in the past have been short-lived and sometimes costly. In addition, the agency needs to address the underrepresentation of minorities in staff and policy-making positions. It is clear that the Peace Corps needs to take a long-term approach to this problem, and commit the proper time and resources. We agree with the Peace Corps' current efforts. Establishment of an office to deal with minority issues is a first step towards improving the minority profile at the Peace Corps. This office, which must have the full support of the agency, has been tasked with developing a national plan for the recruitment of minority volunteers.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Peace Corps Director follow through on his efforts to develop a long-term strategy to attract more minorities. This strategy should include realistic minority goals for volunteers and staff, a concerted effort to deal with the perception of minorities that the Peace Corps is a white, middle-class institution, the provision of better demographic information to recruiters, better training, and targeted advertising and recruitment campaigns to attract minorities.

We recognize that the Peace Corps' efforts to increase minorities may be made more complicated by its need to place greater emphasis on recruiting more volunteers with scarce skills. Therefore, this recommendation should be implemented as part of the agency's efforts to redesign its overall recruitment strategies as we recommended in chapter 3.

Peace Corps Can Better Achieve Its Third Goal

Each of the Peace Corps' three goals appear as being equally important in its enabling legislation. However, the agency has traditionally focused little attention on achieving the third goal. When first established, the agency envisioned that volunteers would serve their tours overseas, return home, and automatically teach the American people what they had learned in the Peace Corps. Consequently, a major mechanism to systematically carry out this goal was not established. While the Peace Corps, has over the years, developed several third goal (or "development education") programs, these programs have received only minimal funding and have not received much attention from Peace Corps.

Peace Corps' Current Activities

The Peace Corps currently has three programs which seek to attain its third goal. These programs historically have received only about 2 percent of the Peace Corps' budget, although Peace Corps officials told us recently that this funding has increased to about 10 percent. The most structured of these is the Partnership Program, which was created in 1964. Through this program, American citizens, usually organized by schools, community groups, foundations, or corporations, become partners with citizens of developing countries by funding small-scale projects managed by Peace Corps volunteers. Americans learn about the countries' cultures and the development process through the exchange of letters, music, photos, and other items reflective of the cultures and lifestyles.

Currently, the Partnership program has a staff of five at Peace Corps headquarters, and a small budget. Peace Corps encourages volunteers to get involved in partnership projects activities, many of which are conducted as secondary to the volunteers' primary assignment. The volunteer, along with the local community, write the proposal for the partnership project and Peace Corps/Washington circulates the project proposal through its channels for funding. During fiscal year 1988, 101 partnership projects were funded with privately donated cash and pledges of $222,294. For fiscal year 1990, host country communities submitted 127 project proposals, 94 have been funded with privately donated cash and pledges of $226,156.

Another third goal effort, established in 1987, is the Volunteers in Development Education (VIDE) program, which was developed in conjunction with two U.S. state governments. Virginia and Ohio were the first to participate in this pilot program, and Peace Corps is planning to expand it to nine other states. Through this program, recently returned Peace Corps volunteers, based on the perspective of their Peace Corps

experience, give presentations and conduct sessions on global issues in schools, churches, and other community organizations for 6 months. VIDE is funded by the states and, thus, operates at no cost to the Peace Corps. By 1989 only two states and nine returned volunteers were participating.

The Peace Corps is also providing some assistance to the development education efforts of the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and local returned Peace Corps groups. The National Council, which was incorporated in 1979, hired its first staff in 1987 and is now active in supporting issues related to the Peace Corps. Its publication serves as a clearinghouse for information on third goal and other activities of local returned volunteer groups. Using $142,650 in grants from the Peace Corps, the Council provides mini-grants to finance development education projects. Only seven mini-grants of $5,000 have been granted each year. The Peace Corps also conducts mailings for the Council, using its database of the names and addresses of 42,000 returned volunteers.

In addition to these three, Peace Corps recently introduced the World Wise Schools Program, which seeks to link the 6,000 Peace Corps Volunteers in 69 nations with 6,000 elementary and junior high school classes in the United States. The Peace Corps informed us that as of April 1990, this program had linked nearly 1,000 classrooms in 36 states with 1,100 active volunteers. Through the exchange of letters, artifacts, and other educational materials, the volunteer serves as a window for U.S. students to view and experience new countries and cultures. Peace Corps officials said the program reflects the diversity of the American population, and thus far, at least 50 school superintendents have been asked to participate. Peace Corps was still working out details of the program when we completed our review; however, we believe the World Wise Schools Program should be an excellent opportunity for Peace Corps to involve a number of volunteers in schools.

Additional Assistance for Returned Volunteers Could Be Provided

Section 18 of the Peace Corps Act, as added by the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act of 1988, encourages the Peace Corps to do more to promote third goal activities, and while not specific, it encourages the Director to facilitate and assist activities carried out by former volunteers in furtherance of the third goal. Members of the National Council and local groups believe the Peace Corps could do more to assist them. Peace Corps officials stated that, as of January 1990, the agency had

not done anything specific to respond to section 18. However, representatives of the National Council with whom we spoke made several recommendations. For example, they believe Peace Corps could

- more effectively serve as a clearinghouse for information on third goal activities of the local returned volunteer groups;
- provide additional financial support and staff resources for third goal activities by setting aside funds to assist the Council and help finance newsletters to inform the local returned volunteer groups about the activities within the Peace Corps;
- obtain Privacy Act clearance from its list of 42,000 returned volunteers so that it could provide their addresses to the Council; and
- make an effort to locate the approximately 80,000 volunteers for which the agency has no known addresses.

The Reverse Peace Corps

A reverse Peace Corps, a program tried in the mid-1960s, was also intended to help accomplish the third goal by bringing individuals from developing countries to work in America. During the mid-1960s, the United States sponsored a pilot program entitled Volunteers to America. Under this program, the United States enlisted volunteers from other countries to work in the United States in programs similar to Peace Corps programs in developing countries. Created as a 2-year pilot program in 1965, 64 volunteers from 12 countries were recruited and sent to various parts of the United States during the first phase of the program. A total of 105 volunteers participated in the 2-year program. Volunteers were highly qualified individuals skilled in a variety of disciplines, and served as teachers and in other capacities throughout the United States before returning to their home countries.

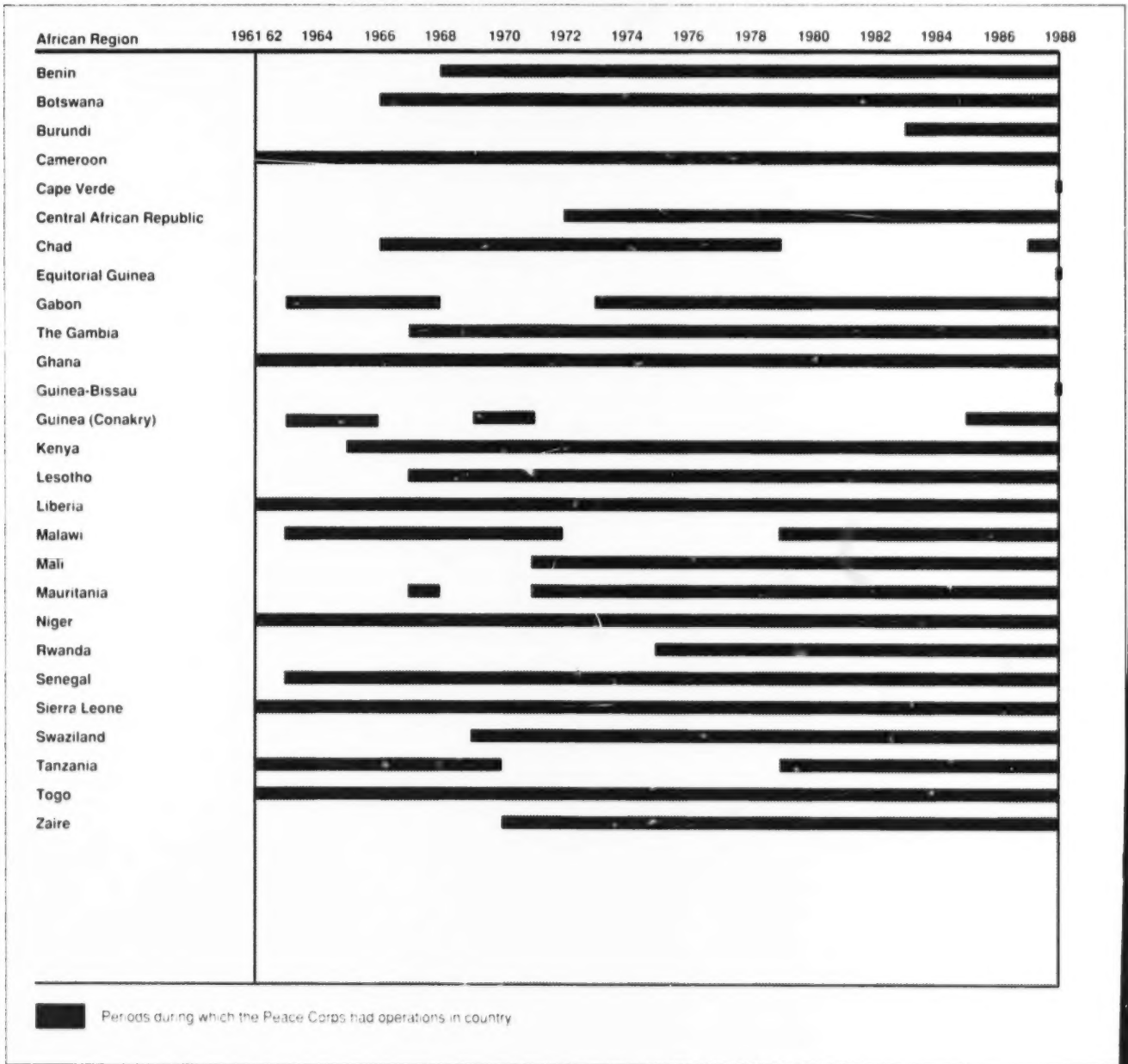
The program was initially part of the Department of State and was funded by the federal government, states involved in the program, and host countries. However, the Congress did not appropriate additional funds for the program when it was transferred to the Peace Corps without congressional consent, and consequently, it was terminated upon completion of the pilot program. Members of the National Council of Returned Volunteers expressed interest in reinstating such a program, and stated that, if asked, they would assist the Peace Corps in establishing assignments for volunteers in the United States.

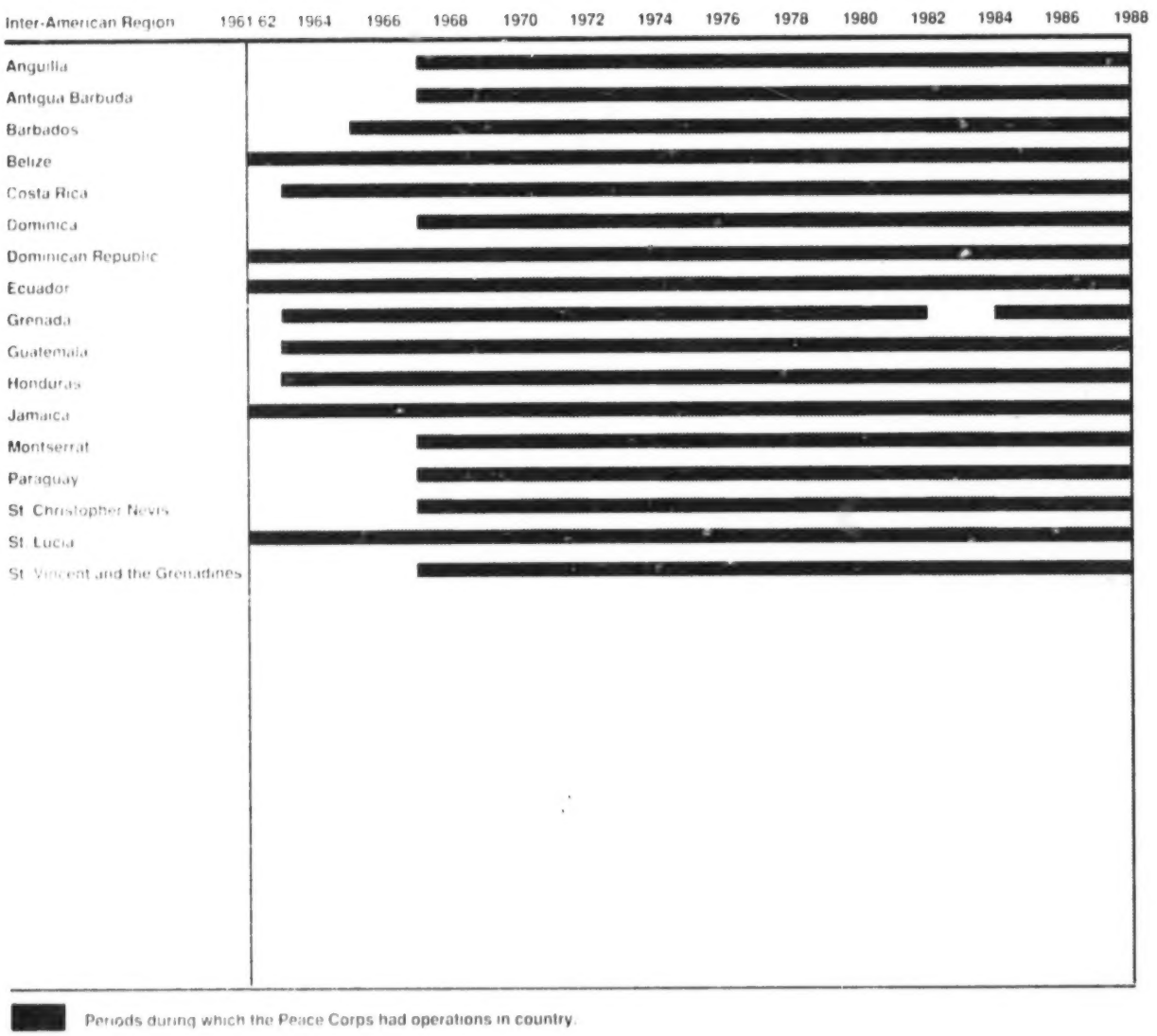
Conclusions

Peace Corps has traditionally focused little attention on achieving the third goal in a systematic way. It was envisioned by early Peace Corps

planners that volunteers would return to the United States and automatically teach what they had learned overseas. The Peace Corps Partnership program is the oldest structured third goal mechanism; however, more programs have been initiated, such as VIDE and World Wise Schools program. Recently, the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers was formed to engage in third goal activities. Peace Corps could improve its participation by supporting the National Council.

Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers, 1988




Inter-American Region
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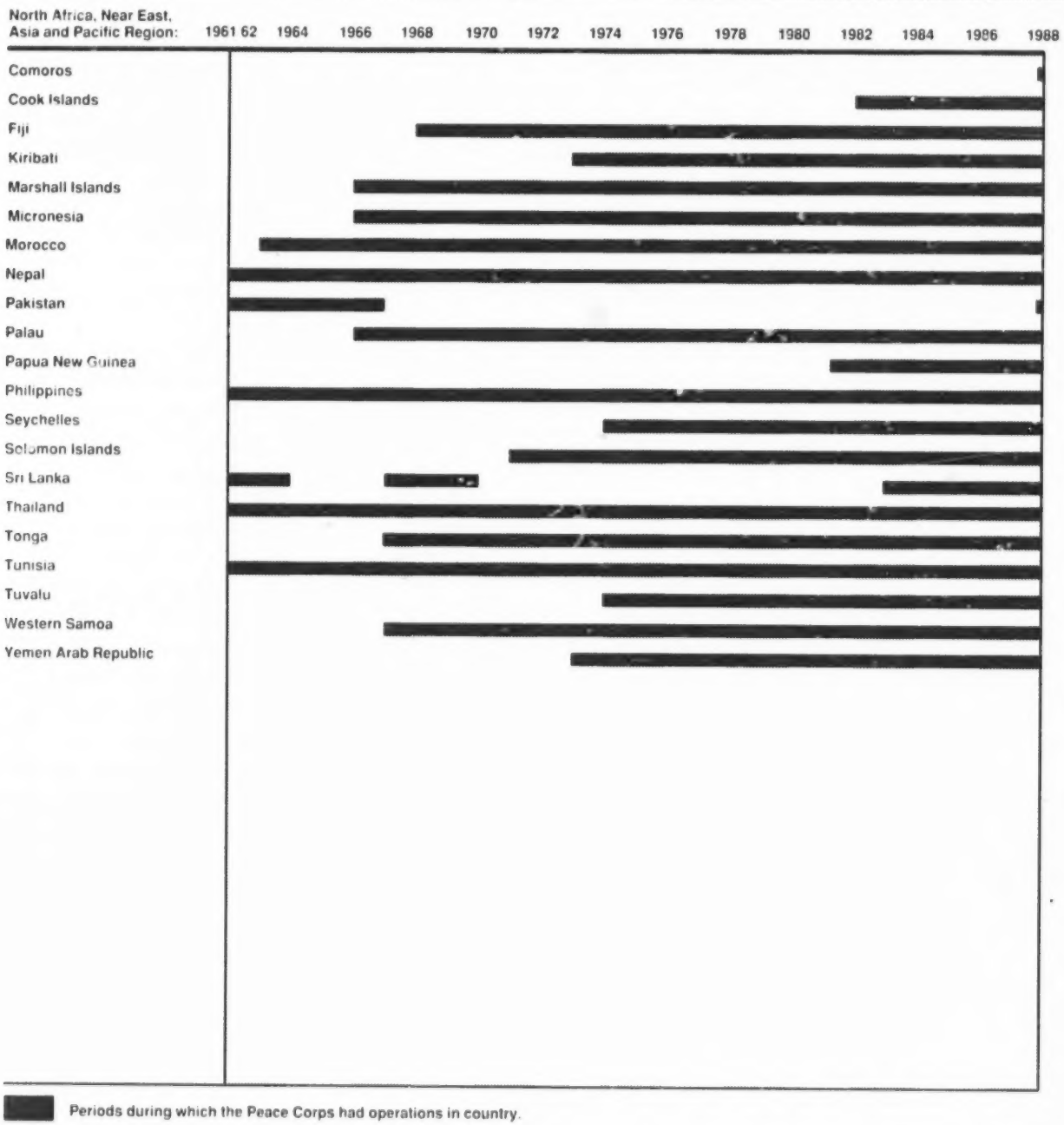
Barbados
Belize
Costa Rica
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Grenada
Guatemala
Honduras
Jamaica
Montserrat
Paraguay
St Christopher Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Periods during which the Peace Corps had operations in country.


North Africa, Near East, Asia and Pacific Region:
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Comoros
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Kiribati
Marshall Islands
Micronesia
Morocco
Nepal
Pakistan
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Seychelles
Solomon Islands
Sri Lanka
Thailand
Tonga
Tunisia
Tuvalu
Western Samoa
Yemen Arab Republic
Periods during which the Peace Corps had operations in country.

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